Stop to rest, recharge and reconnect

By Natalie Blewitt
Growth Team coordinator

You are almost there! Holidays are just around the corner and now, more than ever, is an important time to stop, rest, recharge and stay connected to others.

Teaching is a demanding but very rewarding career, and it is vital you look after yourself throughout your career. Whether you are just starting out and learning your craft or you have been teaching for a few years, self-care is so important.

There are loads of other actions you can take to look after your mental and physical health. Some ideas of things you can do may be as simple as:

- Going for a walk.
- Spending time with a furry friend.
- Catching up for coffee with a mate.
- Singing or dancing to your favourite song.
- Eating healthy foods.
- Spending some time in the garden.
- Creating something.
- Taking some time to do something you enjoy.

There is no shame in reaching out for help, talking to someone outside your usual support network of close family and friends, seeking advice from a trusted professional or having a phone conversation with someone in the know.

According to Beyond Blue, during 2020, people in Australia accessed their services “more than 254,000 times to discuss concerns – both big and small – and you can too.” All calls and chats with Beyond Blue are one-to-one with a trained mental health professional and completely confidential. You can reach out to someone from Beyond Blue 24 hours/seven days a week on 1300 22 4636.

“Sometimes it helps to know that someone is listening and that you don’t have to face problems alone,” according to Lifeline WA. Contact Lifeline on 13 11 14, 24 hours a day. Head to their website to find out more: wa.lifeline.org.au Healthy WA advocates for “having something to look forward to, (to) promote positive mental health and wellbeing. Everyone is different, so find out what works for you.”

Some of the ideas you can find on their website include giving to others by volunteering, practicing relaxation techniques such as meditation or yoga, going shopping, riding a bike, playing a sport you like, and so much more.

It is also important to remember to get enough sleep. We have all had sleepless nights thinking about aspects of our classroom and professional practice, but if you are tired, you are more likely to feel stressed, worried and/or even anxious.

Ensure you establish a night-time routine which could include going to sleep and getting up at the same time each day, winding down by reading a book or listening to relaxing music, etc. The Healthy WA website (healthywa.wa.gov.au) has a great list of ideas and things for you to try.

As outlined in our previous edition, remember that you also have access to the trained staff via the Employee Assistance Program, PeopleSense. This service provides confidential counselling services for Department of Education employees.

These services can be accessed for personal or work-related issues and are designed to provide short-term psychological assistance for employees and their immediate family.

Further information about PeopleSense can be found at peoplesense.com.au or by phoning 1300 307 912.

Connect with other teachers from outside your school/network, by attending some professional learning through the SSTUWA Education and Training Centre.

There are always fantastic courses on offer for members and perhaps your concerns can be alleviated by learning more about your students' needs or how to deal with difficult situations.

You can access our courses either face to face or online, so connect with others through upskilling yourself.

Find out more at sstuwa.org.au/training

Remember, we have all been through a very long term and a challenging start to 2021.

Be kind to yourself and take some time these upcoming holidays just for you.

Authorised by Sally Dennis, General Secretary, The State School Teachers' Union of W.A.
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